RAVEN--chhosskiong or pherok. This bird is held in reverence and never killed. But see under "Omen." 825

[132]RECRUIT--seepa sóma. 701

[133]REMARRY TO--yáng hlokstey pakston cho ches. The first wife of a man is called his "changchhen," if she has no children, or if he is rich enough to keep two families, he may marry a second wife, who is called his "changchhungan," and if she too is childless, or if he can afford to keep three families, he may marry a third wife, who is called his "yángchhungan." So long as these three are alive, he may not marry a fourth wife. If one wife dies, another wife may be taken in her place. As a matter of fact, the Ladákis are much too poor to wish to support more than one wife in a family, and it is only the necessity for having children, who will one day relieve them of the "forced labour" duties attaching to the possession of land, that induces them to [134] remarry. If a man and his brothers have got, in common, three living wives and yet no child, they may not get another wife, but may call in to their family circle another man, to be a husband to their wives; this man is termed a "phortsak." If he too begets no child, still another man, called "pho-chhungan," may be called in. If he too is childless, the original husband and wife must resort to adoption. In the case of the death of the eldest husband of a woman, the latter is at liberty to divorce herself, in the manner described (see "Divorce)." After this she must leave her late husband's house, leaving with her husband's family any children she may have; she is then at liberty to marry again, and so on, for nine times, after which she must be content to remain a widow. If she does not divorce herself from the husband's corpse, she becomes, or rather remains, the wife of the younger brothers. She cannot remain in her late husband's house, and in possession of her children, unless she continues to remain the wife of the younger brothers. As a matter of fact, a Ladáki woman, unless she is childless, never leaves her original husband's home. In any case, it is considered improper for a man or woman to remarry within a year of the death of his, or her, wife or husband, and during this period of mourning a widower is termed "yoóksápo" and a widow "yooksámo." If 587 595 [511] ● [65] 597 586 768 595 768 765 587

586 money: One "coat lappet full" of money, that is, a certain sum of money which is to be put into the lappet of the long coat (t'o-sgaṅ) and is to be handed over in this manner. The concept to-sgaṅ points to the fact that the fine was originally a very high one. But the concept is extremely flexible and accordingly it is usually stretched--or shrunk--a great deal. In Tibet, too, there frequently prevails a "double standard" for man and woman. A proverb states, in the conciseness characteristic of the Tibetan language: "Man--coat lappet--cow; woman--coat lappet--horse"; that is to say, the man who breaks up the marriage pays as compensation the price of a cow; the woman in the corresponding case pays approximately threefold price of a horse. Often one party maliciously leaves the other and does not think of paying a sum of money as compensation. Then there are violent disputes between the families and the tribes of the persons involved, as well as protracted litigations in court.

ooo In comparison to this, the relationship between the young couple Namgyal and Chosskyid was distinguished very favorably by the fact that here each party was attached to the other by warm affection. Namgyal guarded his "migbras" (the apple of his eye) with love and with a wakeful eye and Chosskyid /119/ as time went by became increasingly a faithful helpmate and support to him in all his duties.

• 511 With respect to outward signs of good fortune, that is, material goods, Kubera, the god of wealth, had not provided the Dragshos family too liberally, according to the concept of their Tibetan neighbors and acquaintances. Despite their elegant descent they were nothing but farmers whose modest wealth consisted of their possession in the fields and cattle. Aside from fields and clover meadows the family owned three horses, a number of cows, a few yak oxen and donkeys, fifty odd sheep, and some goats as well as chickens. Cash was always quite scarce with them as it is with all Tibetan farmers. The money as a rule just sufficed for the payment of the heavy taxes, for the purchase of the greatest necessities, insofar as these could not be supplied by their own farm. The latter was, luckily, the case to a very large degree. Wheat, barley, and buckwheat were supplied by their fields. The grain [252] was ground at one of the small water mills by the brook; it was sifted through a sieve made of horse hair, and in this manner they obtained a coarse, nourishing flour. Apricots mature in the hot summer sun of

Apricots mature in the hot summer sun of 511
the highland plateaus up to a height of approximately 3,500 meters. [245]

Milk is supplied by the cows, the ordinary Indian cow, the [234]
yak cow, and the dsomo, a cross between the yak bull and the ordinary cow. The sheep and the goats supply meat for those whose Buddhistic conscience permits it. Wool for spinning and weaving is derived from [236] the sheep, but in this case additional coarse wool must be bought from the merchant, since the yield from the shearing of their own herd is not sufficient. The goats and the yaks yield the coarse wool for the weaving of blankets, coarse carpets, sackcloth, and for the making of string.

If the Tibetan farmer is thus to a great extent self-sufficient 437
there nevertheless remains a large number of items that belong to the necessities of life with him and which he must buy. He cannot keep up with the consumption of butter because of the great amounts he uses in the preparation of the butter tea. He buys butter from traveling merchants; this butter is sewn into goat hides and often leaves a great deal to be desired so far as its cleanliness is concerned. Salt, which is in great demand with him, he obtains in exchange for grain or dried apricots, from the nomads of the upland plateaus of Rupchu or Jangtang. These nomads break the salt from the numerous /120/ dried-up salt [135] lake beds of their homeland, and through a long, laborious journey they have their sheep and goats carry it on their backs in small sacks, in order to purchase with it in exchange trade the above-named goods and other merchandise in the neighboring provinces of Ladakh, Spiti, Lahul, and Sangskar. The highly coveted natron (used as addition to the butter tea) is likewise supplied by these upland plateaus where in many places it is found as a residue of dried-up salt water lakes. From 439 the Indian merchant the Tibetan buys Indian tea, spices, dye stuffs to dye the cloth, cotton cloth from Indian and English cottonmills (Manchester), European blue, brown, or red cloth for festive clothes, sashes, as well as all kinds of tools, combs made of hardwood, mirrors, knives, sewing materials, cheap standard clocks, soap, candies, tobacco, and many other items.

In the house of the Dragshos order and industrious work were 461
always held to be very important. From the early spring until well into the late autumn they arose together with the sun and went to work, which usually was not stopped till the sun went down, and frequently much later when darkness was setting in.

The plowing of the fields was done by the master of the house, 241
as was the custom with all farmers; the watering and weeding was done 462

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in the dak bungalow—soup, hamburgers, cocoa, canned fruit, and *chapattis*. Discussion turned to the court session.

"Are these families on this land legally?" I asked.

"No. They are all illegal squatters. The law of Punjab provides that a man may homestead public land and that he has a period of time to make payment for it. But he must pay."

"How much must he pay?"

"About two hundred rupees [forty dollars] an acre."

"Have any paid?"

"None."

"Do they all owe arrears in taxes?"

"Yes, all of them."

"What is the law of Punjab in such cases?"

"The squatters must be ejected."

"Is that what you are going to do tomorrow? Eject them?"

There was a long pause.

"None will be ejected," he finally replied with emphasis. "You are a judge and you know that law is law but that the law is not always justice."

I nodded but answered, "Yet this is public property."

"True," he replied, "but these farmers are India's outposts. They occupy land bordering countries that may be unfriendly. It is important that India keep this border country populated. Certainly Soviet Communism exploits every discontent in India. It is better that India sacrifice her legal rights or even lose a part of her public domain and have happy people here than that she enforce her legal rights and end up with discontented citizens on this sensitive northern border."

"Why can't the people pay taxes?"

His eyes were now wide with seriousness. "Why, these people only subsist. They raise barely enough to live. They trade barley for wool from Tibet and make their own clothes. I suppose none of the families we saw this afternoon has a cash income each year of even ten rupees."

735 Ten rupees is only two dollars, I thought. With two dollars a
• 511 year per family the women could have a little talcum powder perhaps, a little hair oil, a few pieces of soap. There would be precious little, if any, for tobacco, for medicines, for sweets. I recalled a scene that had happened earlier this day. A dozen or more children from three to ten years old had gathered around me at Jispa. They were in tatters, a bit pinched in the face, very shy, and very dirty. I opened a small bag of chocolate drops. The children at once held out their dirty little hands, their eyes big with expectation. As I put one piece in each hand the fingers closed tightly on it. The first bite was taken carefully and tentatively. Then the expressions quickly changed—the eyes lighted, the tenseness was gone, the faces were happy and relaxed, and one little fellow actually shouted. The chocolates were wolfed down as quickly as a dog swallows a morsel of meat. In a few seconds each of the dirty little hands was stretched out to me again.

These little tots stood huddled together for hours, following me like a shadow wherever I went. And every time I looked at them they would shyly hold out their tiny hands palms up and look at me with eyes that carried as powerful a plea as man with all the skills known to drama could devise.

000 train. There was one other exception, when we traveled from Pagmur to Leh with Nehru's horsemen.

133 About eight miles below Pagmur at a place called Zara we got
361 horses and yaks. Zara is a barren, rolling basin that lies at the confluence of three bleak valleys. There is no mark of habitation at Zara except a few tents. Zara is indeed only a rendezvous for the goatherds of Rupshu—a region as remote from civilization and even from caravans as any place in Central Asia, an area inhabited by migrating tribes who have and enforce their own law quite independently of the central government at Leh.

136 Rupshu has large, fat marmots (called wild dogs by the natives), who peer curiously at all travelers. They pop in and out of their holes, running awkwardly. Then they stand and whistle in
[825] a tantalizing manner. The natives believe the marmot has the soul
[751] of a man who is mischievous and malicious. The fat* is used externally for rheumatism.

Rupshu also has some geese and ducks, the burrhl or blue sheep, the big-horned *Ovis ammon*, a snow cock, and gazelles. Big brown wolves raid the flocks of the miserably poor people, called Rupshupa or Changpa, who roam its almost barren basins and ridges.

137 This area has bunch grass, the mossy *burtse*, the low *dama* bush,
and a small sage-colored bush that the Tibetans call *jyapshen*. But one takes a long step between clumps of grass. The mark of
735 overgrazing lies heavily on Rupshu. The mark of poverty is on
• 511 the people and their possessions, as well as on the land. Their
[291] brown pup-like tents are often in tatters. The Rupshupa go barefoot, wrapped in heavy brown coats that reach to their ankles. The black hair of men and women alike hangs in a tangled mass down their foreheads and necks. Their skin has ground in it the dust of hundreds of storms, and they carry the look of people who have not bathed for months on end.

000 We met the Rupshupa at Zara on a small piece of green meadow by a clear-water brook that comes down from the east.

*[of the marmot--Analyst]

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she was nursing a child; and as the baby fed, Nordzin picked lice off herself and off the child and cracked them with her fingernails. Her hair was matted. Nordzin, about five feet eight and slight, had a flat face that was creased with care and worry and unhappiness. The faces of the children were as filthy as the rags they wore.

I inquired of Pamba why they were so poor when Phuntzog made twelve dollars a month and the garden produced all the vegetables they could eat. The answer was slow in coming, and even then it was evasive. It seems that a great portion of the income of the Gyalangs goes into the making of *chan*, the local barley beer. Indeed, one eighth of the farm production of Leh is used to make this brew. It stimulates many quarrels between the brothers. With the help of the *chan*, Phuntzog and Pamba raise their voices over Nordzin.

When I entered the Gyalang house, I began to understand the basis for the friction. It is a one-room affair. A clay stove, built by Phuntzog, is against one wall. The floor is of mud and very dirty. There are no chairs, no table, no bed. The one wife, four children, and two husbands roll up together on the floor.

There was a scowl on Pamba's face when I asked him about Phuntzog.

"He's Nordzin's favorite," Pamba complained.

"But he's gone most of the day and many nights on his mail route," I said.

Pamba only shrugged his shoulders.

Later I talked with Phuntzog. The sun was just rising over Leh, and he was in a hurry to get started on the road to Spitok. He, like Pamba, is short, squat, round-faced, and bedraggled. Like Pamba, he was full of complaints. His brother was getting the best of the arrangement, he said. His long absences gave Pamba the advantage. It was he, Phuntzog, who owned the place; yet it was Pamba who acted like lord and master. And Pamba was lazy and made Nordzin do all the work.

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fact, go hand in hand. Poverty is indeed the main instrument for promoting and perpetuating ignorance.

Each monastery has not only a spiritual head (the *skushok*), but also a managerial head (the *chhagzot*), and a treasurer (the *konyer*). There are two classes of monks—the praying monks and the working monks. The working monks are under the *chhagzot* and the *konyer*. The *chhagzot* is usually a lama whose main job is to supervise the making of leases of the farmlands and their cultivation, and to collect the rents. He usually rides the biggest, whitest horse in the region. When he or the lama who represents him comes to a village to collect the rents, he brings with him more than the usual power and prestige of the landlord. He also brings the power and prestige of the church. He is the holy man to whom all allegiance is owed. He is the one who holds the tenant in the palm of his hand. He may, in appearance, be a kindly man. But as a symbol he has a terrifying importance. Since he is under a mandate to keep the people poor, he can in good conscience exact the pound of flesh. And they—poor, miserable, whimpering villagers—can only bow in submission.

These Ladakhis are poor people—poor in the strictest sense in which we use the word. They get some income from sheep, goats, and yaks. But the bulk of their livelihood is from agriculture. They are on a bare subsistence level. They commonly work per family only a few acres. Their diet has very little meat in it. The Rupshupa, whom I saw at Zara, eat milk, cheese, and meat, supplemented by barley that they get in barter for wool. But they are the exceptions. The rest are, for the most part, vegetarians. They eat barley and wheat cakes (*chapattis*), the broth of turnips with some peas in it, baked barley flour (*sattu*), fruits in season (apples, grapes, apricots), and *gur gur cha*. They have one escape from the monotony of life—apart from the festivals at the monasteries. That escape is through *chan*—a local beer, made from wheat and barley, that looks like dirty gruel and smells like stale beer.

The Rupshupa, now that the price of wool is high, may have

735 an annual cash income of eighty dollars a year per family. But
•511 that is far above what the average Ladakhi family will have in a year.

[342] At Upshi, where we first touched the Indus River, we stayed with the headman of the village, Jigmet. Jigmet's house has two stories. It is made of stone and mud with rafters of poplar wood. The ceilings are about six feet high. The floors are mud. The roof is flat, constructed of rocks and mud laid on top of boughs. The cooking is done in a fireplace located under a hole in the roof. The toilet is on an open balcony on the second floor. It consists only of a hole in the mud floor. There are no furnishings in the house—no chairs, no beds, no tables. There are no decorations on the walls, no carpets on the floors.

Jigmet is the richest man in the village. He owns the land he works—eighteen *kanals* or a little more than one acre. He has no sheep, no goats, no yaks. He has one dzo that he uses for plowing. For fuel he uses the dung of the dzo and the common sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)—a silvery-barked shrub with sharp spines and orange-yellow berries that flourishes in the valley of the Indus. He raises only barley, and he irrigates it from the Indus. He has a few chickens. Their eggs, the dzo's milk, and the barley are his income. He bragged that he had a cash income, over and above his living, of fifty dollars a year. A local official laughed at the idea. He said five dollars a year would be closer.

[291] Jigmet wore a gray wool gown, sandals, and a Ladakhi hat. The hat, distinguished by a rim made of black fur, had a round, squat top. Jigmet had one other adornment. In his right ear he wore a big gold earring about an inch and a half in diameter. His face was sad; his black eyebrows and thick, black mustache accentuated the severity of his countenance. Yet he was a gracious host. He showed us to our room on the second floor. The room had a small balcony big enough for a sleeping bag. It faced north, and I could see miles and miles up the Indus. We no sooner had unpacked than Jigmet's family appeared—a wife suckling a babe,

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a grandmother, two small boys, a teen-age girl. I asked to get their pictures in several different groupings. Jigmet directed them to comply. After each picture, Jigmet came up and, with outstretched hand, said, "Bakshish" (an Arabic word meaning a tip, which the British introduced to Ladakh). Each time I gave him or the wife or the children something—candy, cigarettes, salt. The picture taking took a half hour or so. Jigmet and the family then left. When Rahul and I were eating dinner, Jigmet reappeared. He sat silently watching us for ten minutes or so. Then he got up, held out his hand, and said, "Bakshish." I gave him some more cigarettes. At the crack of dawn he was back, saying, "Bakshish." He followed me around as I took pictures of Upshi and its people.

I worked my way through his fields of beardless barley to get pictures of the Indus River, about a quarter mile distant. Every few yards, Jigmet, who followed me closely, pleaded, "Bakshish." That word came so frequently that it rang in my ears. By the time I had returned to the house, loaded my cameras, and started to leave, Jigmet had increased the frequency of the request. "Bakshish, bakshish, bakshish" came like a chant. I had paid him well for the lodgings. I did not know what the proprieties were. Rahul said I had paid enough; so did the Indian Army officer who was traveling with us from Pagmur to Leh.

I walked up to Jigmet and held out my hand to say good-by. He did not put out his hand but said, "If there is no bakshish, there is no use shaking hands."

I took his hand anyway and gave it a firm squeeze, saying, "This is the way we do it in America. Friendship is more important than bakshish."

Jigmet stood disconsolate as I rode off on Moti. Though Jigmet, by Ladakhi peasant standards, was well off, he had not more than ten dollars a year cash income. All who lived around him were much poorer than he, held in a vicious serfdom under the monasteries. It was his duty to feed and care for every lama who went

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by. It was only the occasional stranger who offered him any possible opportunity to make a cash profit.

The poverty and ignorance in which the lamas hold the people of this region mean that the lamas are supreme in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. There is no revolt, not even any apparent resentment. Yet people are people the world around; and the Ladakhis show their resentment in simple, innocuous ways. It is in the form of making fun of the lamas. And one of the most dramatic ways is in the singing of a famous Ladakhi folk song.

The women of Gya sang it for me. A dozen or more stood in line, close together. They were dressed in their conventional long black wool dresses. Most of them had on the picturesque *perakh*,[1] and the large black wool earpieces that stood out like sails from their heads. Most of them wore sheepskins over their shoulders—the skin that serves as a ground covering at night, a protection against rain by day, and a shield for the carrying of loads on the back. They were giggling as they started to sing; and the giggles interfered with the song until at last they finally settled to a serious rendition. The song is a take-off on a man accused of being a lama. The man's name is Tashiwangyal, and he is the singer.

Don't think I have no father;[1]
My father's caste is bright like sandalwood.[2]
Don't think I have no mother;
I'm like the guitar made out of the reindeer skin.[3]
Don't think I have no tongue;
I'm like the cord made of the inner skin of the goat.[4]
Don't think I am a lama;
Thang Thang Gyalpo is my lama.[5]•

[1]A lama is supposed to renounce his father and mother.
[2]He is, in other words, spotless.
[3]He's made of proper stuff.
[4]This skin has a fine texture.
[5]He was a very superior man who built a lot of monasteries.
•See page 334.

1 [Headdress of older women -- Analyst]

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as if they might be playing a sheepish musical chairs. Actually they have been tied neck to neck, but with alternate heads looking in opposite directions, resulting in such a mix-up of horns, that it looks as though they would never sort out their own again. They are being milked, which done, they are freed by the simple expedient of pulling the end of the rope, when they come undone like a piece of knitting. Looking around the camp we notice sixteen little fires made of *ayug*, the dry root which is found on the mountains, whence also the dried dung is collected for fuel. Round the nearest fire, on which Ladaki tea is boiling, sit four Ladakis; at the side of each lies his bag of barley-flour. From the folds of their ample coats they pull their silver-lined wooden cups. These are filled, and kept filled from the teapot by means of a wooden ladle. Instead of flavouring it with sugar, they take out of small bags some butter to add to their tea, and there is no need to ask "Have you put butter in my tea?" for the appetizing layer of grease floating on the top loudly proclaims the fact. Having quenched their thirst, each man fills his cup with some raw flour from his bag, adds sufficient tea to make a thick paste, and then eats it with his fingers. You ask me how they can possibly enjoy such coarse fare, and I can only reply that judging from their laughter, they evidently do. Whilst we, shivering with cold, stand watching this dinner party, a Changpa strolls up from the river with a can of water. He seems to find the heat oppressive, for he has slipped his right arm out of his sleeve, leaving arm, shoulder and side of chest bare to the gentle breeze. How complex has become our civilization! The Ladaki needs but some dry flour, a little tea, and, with one rug to cover himself by night, is quite happy. If not, he simply takes off his day clothes, which then serve him as blankets by night. If the cold is really bitter three, four, five, six, or even more, sleep together, giving one another warmth. Presumably they do not say "Last in bed puts out the light," but "Last

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in bed sleeps on the outside," as the outside bed-fellow has one side relatively exposed. Sleep at an altitude of about 17,000 feet is fugitive; in fact neither of us got much that night, and, even when it did come, we woke up with a most disagreeable sensation, as if somebody were sitting on our chests so that we could not properly fill them with air.

We have finally arrived at Drogpo Karpo, where the conference is to take place. This is a large grassy plain, surrounded by snow mountains, at the further end of which the camp is pitched. In the centre are the tents of the Commissioner and Wazir with their respective flags. In front of these stands a square tent nicely carpeted, in which are a table and chairs. This is to serve as conference room. We had arrived a little before time, and before the Tibetans. They, however, turned up soon afterwards, and presented quite an impressive sight, as they rode, two and two, into camp. First came, not the standard bearer, but the Umbrella-of-State-Bearer. After these some soldiers, although we should not have recognized them as such, had we not inquired as to their function, for there was nothing very martial about them, save the muzzle-loaders they bore. They wore the usual dressing-gown coats of homespun held together round the waist by a big kammerbund, red Wellington boots with very thick soles and hats shaped somewhat like lemon squeezers. These were followed by various members of the staff, then the great man himself, whilst still others followed him. Having settled themselves into their quarters, the Wazir sent a message across to say that H.H. the Maharajah desired them to regard themselves as his guests. They on their part sent a delegation with twenty-five bricks of tea, and a piece of *snambu* (homespun) with the request that a time be fixed when their chief representative, the Gaspon, could come to pay his respects. Punctually to time he arrived. His dress consisted of a lovely blue skirt, and a Chinese coat of the same colour which was buttoned up to his neck. His

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The Doctor Memsahib once had 757
the privilege of coming upon a family unawares just at dawn in the middle of winter. She had been called out to a case in a village, nine miles from Leh, the last two miles of which had to be done in the dark, that is by snow and starlight, and she and her Ladaki nurse were glad to walk over the frozen snow a little to keep their feet from freezing. Already icicles stretched from upper to lower eye-lashes, and whiskers, formed by the frozen moisture of their breath, adorned their mouths. The patient's friends had sent for the Doctor three days too late ; already two small lives were extinct, and the last dim hope of the mother lay in a surgical interference. An operation was performed, after sterilizing instruments in a cooking pot by the light of a fire of sticks on the mud floor, the nurse giving chloroform for the first time. But it was too late and, at about two a.m., the patient died. We sat on till the first dim light appeared, for out-of-doors we feared wolves in the dark, and a strange experience it was. On one side of the 593
room the corpse covered with sacking and filthy sheepskin, 764
near the fire on the floor quietly sobbing, was the unkempt, shaggy, ragged husband, who, for all his uncouth appearance, had exhibited the most extraordinary tenderness and patience with his suffering wife ; near the stove his mother-in-law, a wrinkled old hag, who wailed intermittently. On the further side of the stove hens nestled. In the next cold fireless room two children were sleeping, and we were told that downstairs a blind old grandfather had been put in the straw cellar (again the " wrong way round " compared with our hayloft in the West) to keep warm in the horses' fodder. The Ladaki nurse spread her coat, lined with sheepskin in the corner by the stove for her Doctor, and fetched a thick horse-cover for herself. The fire of manure in the stove had gone out, and the two mourners occasionally added sticks to the one on the floor, but the room was bone cold. The family were so poor 511 ●
that they had not offered us even a warm drink during the long, 574
bitter night, though, when they thought we were drowsing,

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they themselves took a little barley-and-water soup. Nor was there a cup from which we should have cared to drink, so our supper consisted of one and a half buns each, which the Memsahib had hastily crammed into a pocket. As soon as it was light enough to see, we crept out of that chamber of death into the crisp freshness of the morning air, leaving our ponies and saddlebags to be sent afterwards, and made our way over the hard snow to the nurse's home, which happened fortunately to be in the same village. Here, then, we roused the family from where they slept, all together in the big kitchen-room. The old grandmother was in the cosy corner, cuddling up a little grandchild, and other members had their bedding on the floor round the room, the head of the house and his wife being in an adjacent chamber. The latter was soon blowing the bellows, and the nurse made a hot native soup for the Doctor Memsahib; and how welcome it was with its tiny wormlike rolls of flour and water in the steaming broth. Later on chupattis and butter-tea were prepared for the family breakfast, which was served about nine o'clock, the women clustering near the big stove, the men warming themselves round a fire of sticks kindled on the floor near by, and the head of the home doing a little spinning as he waited for his meal. In this establishment the old grandmother, a widow, had been assigned separate rooms in the house, so that she could live quite independently if she pleased. It is quite usual when the son of the house marries and has reached years of discretion, for his parents to retire if they wish to do so. Then all the possessions are divided into three parts, the parents retaining one, whilst the other two go to the eldest son. When the parents die, he also gets their share. Finally everything really belongs to the heir, but he is responsible for seeing that the other members of the family have sufficient provision.

But before we leave the family group round the fire, let us inquire a little more into the nature of their meals, and some

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

of the customs concerned in the partaking thereof. The better class Ladaki always washes his face and hands before eating. The Buddhist also performs his particular kind of grace before meals. First he takes a little of his flour which he throws away for the gods. Then he dips his ring-finger and thumb into his tea or *chang* (beer), and flips a taste of that away for their benefit, too. He uses the ring-finger as he considers this the cleanest of his digits, for man is born with this finger in his nose. If he wishes to stir anything, he uses this same member. If for his meal he has killed a sheep, he is supposed to offer up a bit of its heart, kidney, liver and every part of its flesh to his god. But meat is rather a luxury for the normal household, yet they have many ways of cooking it which are really delicious. When a *dron* or feast is made, the meat is of course, prepared as a very tasty curry to be eaten with rice, the meat being first fried with plenty of cooking-butter and onions, then stirred for hours till it is really tender in a well-flavoured sauce with plenty of vegetables. The rice is served, piled up on enormous plates, each of which two or three guests will attack, unless they have brought their own normal sized plates. The grander ones then eat with small spoons, the man's being a different shape from the woman's, as the latter is double, the second tiny receptacle at one end being for a child. It is not etiquette to finish up what is on the plate—in most cases it would be impossible; the mother especially must take a large portion home for the rest of the family. The feast is usually begun with butter-tea, and, if so, when the plates of rice and meat have been removed, it is quite good manners in some circles to clean out the cup with one's tongue (much more labour-saving than our ways of washing up !), ready to have it filled with stewed dried apricots. After this course, the same cleansing process will prepare the cup for more filling of butter-tea ! "Chupattis," that is, round flat cakes of unleavened bread, are generally served too, and dipped into the apricot juice or the tea. At a very grand

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER XIII

Professions & Industries

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WE have now to watch our Ladaki friends as they earn their livelihood, for not all are owners of fields, and even those who are find that an extra vocation allows of a dish of meat, rice and other luxuries on special occasions. Let us begin with the professional gentlemen. The clergy will be treated with elsewhere, but in addition there are doctor, horologist, teacher and nun to consider, all of whom, though not real priests, are 759 regarded as performing religious functions. There are quite a number of doctors, some of them doing useful work, although the treatment, by even the best of them, occasionally shows shocking results. Their method of training is much like that which obtained formerly in England, when he who aspired to medical knowledge became apprenticed to a practising physician, and thus by actual experience learnt his [759] trade. The theoretical knowledge is found in four large volumes, belonging to the *Kahgyur* which are the one hundred and eight large books containing the wisdom and knowledge of Lamaism. The doctor or *amchi* dons no distinctive dress, but he can always be recognized, for slung over his back he carries his medicines tied in a long cloth. These he has carefully collected on the hills during the spring and summer months, his knowledge of herbs being doubtless considerable, and to his stock he adds by purchases in the bazar from down- 757 country merchants. See him as he climbs up the rickety staircase right on to the roof to visit one of his patients who

14: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1947 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

241 barley after it has been parched and milled into flour is extremely [252] nutritious, by the side of which Quaker Oats is insipid.

Nak Nas, or black barley, grows at the highest altitude at which any [262] grain can be cultivated. Though it gives a good yield its flour is objected to even by Tibetans, who are by no means fastidious, on account of its black colour.

Drug-zur-Nas, or the six-sided barley, is on the whole inferior to Yangkar Nas both in yield and in quality.

Wheat flourishes in Ladakh and constitutes a really nourishing and palatable food. The two varieties chiefly grown are Drokar, or white wheat, and Dromar, red wheat. It requires less manure than barley. The sandy soil is particularly suitable to the growth of wheat and excellent crops can be seen at 12,000 feet above sea-level. The wholewheat flour makes excellent bread.

A considerable quantity of buckwheat (Drawo) is cultivated, partly because it requires little manure and can flourish with a minimum of water. Its nutritive content bears no comparison with the locally grown barley or wheat.

[373] The mustard plant (Nyungskar) is cultivated because it produces [258] mustard oil for frying, or else illumination when a wick floating in oil serves in lieu of kerosine oil. Oil extracted from the kernels of apricots serves a similar purpose.

The average yield of crops in Ladakh is not much more than sevenfold, though travellers to this country have estimated it at a higher figure. Many peasants are too poor to apply sufficient manure upon their lands, so this alone would account for the apparently low yield of cereals. When there is a scarcity of manure the farmer will plough in the wheat stubble of a field, and occasionally he will leave a field fallow for a year or two before sowing it with wheat or barley.

Reaping is performed with a hook or sickle, the stems of the grain being cut as close to the soil as possible. The threshing and winnowing operations are those which have been practised for hundreds of years in the East—namely, threshing with oxen or donkeys tied to a centre pole in the threshing floor, and winnowing by the use of wooden forks, with which the chaff is thrown into the air and is blown away by the wind, the grain falling to the ground.

511 No matter where you go in the country you find that the people con- 426 trive to eke out a livelihood, though in most cases there is very little margin for luxuries even on a modest scale. This is due to the fact that the majority of peasants are born with a legacy of grain debts which it is obvious they have not the power to repay. In the meantime, when seeding-time comes round, they themselves borrow grain at 25 per cent. for about four or five months, by which time the crop is harvested. Down swoops the creditor to claim not only the interest but also the capital of the debt, leaving the peasant with the scantiest supply of grain with which he must support his family during the winter months. By that time he has consumed the grain which he should use for seeding, so he perforce must add to his accumulated debts by taking out another loan of grain. The grain stockist in this country is a usurer of the worst type, for he takes

14: Asboe M-3 (no date) 1947 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

advantage of the illiteracy of the debtors by manipulating his bills, adding compound interest and in other ways cheating the unfortunate debtor. It is true that the law provides redress or an equitable rate of repayment of loans, but it is scarcely ever invoked by the people, for the grain stockists have so great a stranglehold on the people and are so efficiently organized that there is no recourse for them but to keep on as good terms as possible with their creditors. The only antidote to this form of tyranny would, it seems, be to start co-operative enterprise in the way of a grain bank organized by the peasants themselves, but, alas! they have not attained to that state of society in which this is possible. In short, the exactions and unscrupulous devices practised on the people by grain usurers and petty revenue officials in this country could be tolerated only by those strongly imbued with a fatalistic view of life. This has its basis in the belief, common amongst these Buddhist peasants, that all the ills and abuses in life which they suffer are retribution for evil deeds committed in former existences.

The farm work in the country is done chiefly by the women, who, besides carrying out their functions in their domestic sphere, look after the fields whilst their menfolk go out on trading expeditions, many only returning when the harvest is gathered.

Yet the great paradox in this country is that with all the privations they suffer, the low standard of living to which they have grown accustomed, and the lack of healthy development of social and intellectual activity, they are the cheeriest and most contented people it would be possible to meet. Their wants are few and their ambitions greatly restricted, and so long as they have clothes to wear, which they make from the wool of their sheep, and food to eat they remain cheerful, hospitable, and carefree. It seems unlikely that there will occur any such thing as agrarian agitation for better conditions of life for many centuries to come, for the customs of centuries and the usages practised from time immemorial have become so ingrained in the general make-up of the people that a new idea or a new way of life is repugnant to them.

Yet when all has been said about the living conditions of these farmers of Ladakh one cannot help liking them for their simplicity, their natural kindness, and their cheerfulness. The longer you live amongst them the more you are attracted to them.

five rupees per pony. Provided that the farmer has sufficient fodder to feed his own and his neighbour's cattle, he is glad to get the extra heads in order to increase his supply of manure. 231

Conclusion.

Though the total yield of crops is meagre, as is to be expected in high altitudes and in a practically rainless country, the farmer gets as much out of the land as can well be expected. 241 511

Generally speaking he is very poor, and the prospect of famine is never far removed from him. Were it not for the wool trade carried on between the highlands of Tibet and Lahoul, by way of supplementing the slender harvest he reaps, the Lahouli would be far worse off economically. 439

He does not take kindly to improved methods of agriculture owing to the conservative attitude of the community as a whole. 241 511 185

The slow penetration of western civilization is, however, leading to a slight increase in agricultural activity, in that Lahoulis are now beginning to open up virgin soil which has lain uncultivated for centuries. 177

At best the struggle for existence in so elevated a region as Lahoul is a real and stern one.

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check on the latter was the widespread authority of the monasteries. The chief of these is Himis Gompa, on the left bank of the Indus, 18 miles above Leh. This monastery, which contains 400 to 800 monks and nuns, stands at the head of a wild glen and covers a considerable space of ground. An important festival, called the Himis Tsheshū, is held annually on the tenth day of the fifth month (about June 7), when the whole country-side flock to the monastery and witness the weird devil-dance of the Buddhist Lāmas. A constant spectator is the Gialpo of Ladākh. The monastery is believed to contain great wealth, and the treasure is kept under guard in order to prevent its being carried over the border to Lhāsa. The chief shrine is faced entirely with silver plate. Its treasure-house has small vases filled with pearls, turquoises, and rubies, said to be of value.

Leh (population, 2,079) is the only place of importance in Ladākh, and there are besides 463 villages. With the exception of one village of Shiah Musalmāns in Chhachkot, and of the Arguns or half-breeds, practically the whole population, excluding the town of Leh, is Buddhist. The people style themselves Bhots. According to the last Census, there are now 30,216 Buddhists living in Ladākh. They have the Mongolian cast of features, and are strong and well made, ugly, but cheerful and good-tempered. If they do quarrel over their barley beer (*chang*), no bad blood remains afterwards. They are very truthful and honest, and it is said that in court the accused or defendant will almost invariably admit his guilt or acknowledge the justice of the claim.

The people.

There are five main castes (*riks*): the Rgrial *riks*, or ryot caste; the Trangzey *riks*, or priestly caste; the Rjey *riks*, or high officials; the Hmang *riks*, or lower officials and agricultural classes; and the Tolbay *riks*, or artificers and musicians. This last caste, also known as Bem, is considered inferior.

The Ladākhis may be divided into the Champas or nomads, who follow pastoral pursuits on the upland valleys, too high for cultivation; and the Ladākhis proper, who have settled in the valley and the side valleys of the Indus, cultivating with great care every patch of cultivable ground. These two classes do not, as a rule, intermarry, and Champas rarely furnish recruits to the monasteries. The Ladākhis are mostly engaged in agriculture, and in spite of the smallness of their holdings they are fairly prosperous. Their great wants are fuel and timber. For fuel they use cow-dung and the bush known as *burtse*. Their only timber trees are the scattered and scanty willows and poplars which grow along the watercourses.

scattered and scanty willows and poplars which grow along the watercourses.

There can be little doubt that the modest prosperity of the Ladākhis, in contrast to the universal poverty of Baltistān, is due to the practice of polyandry, which acts as a check on population. Whereas the Baltis, used to the extremes of temperature, are able to seek employment in hot countries, the Ladākhis would die if they were long away from their peculiar climate. In a family where there were many brothers, the younger ones could neither marry nor go abroad for their living. When the eldest son marries, he takes possession of the little estate, making some provision for his parents and unmarried sisters. The eldest son has to support the two brothers next him in age, who share his wife. The children of the marriage regard all three husbands as father. If there be more than two younger brothers, they must go out as Lāmas to a monastery, or as coolies; or, if they be fortunate, a younger son can marry an heiress, and become a Magpa. (If there is no son in a family the daughter inherits, and can choose her own husband, and dismiss him at will with a small customary present. The Magpa husband is thus always on probation, as the heiress can discard him without any excuse or ceremony of divorce.) When the eldest dies or becomes a Lāma, the next brother takes his place. But the wife, provided there are no children, can get rid of his brothers. She ties her finger by a thread to the finger of her deceased husband. The thread is broken, and she is divorced from the corpse and the surviving brothers. The woman in Ladākh has great liberty and power. She can, if she likes, add to the number of her husbands. Drew, who had a very intimate knowledge of Ladākh, thinks that polyandry has had a bad effect on the women, making them overbold and shameless. But others, who are equally entitled to form an opinion, consider this an unfair criticism.

In the town of Leh are many families of half-castes known as Arguns, the results of the union between Ladākhi women and Kashmīris, Turkī caravan-drivers, and Dogrās. The Dogrā children were known as Ghulāmzādas, and were bondmen to the State. The half-castes of Leh are no more unsatisfactory in Tibet than elsewhere, and many travellers have testified to the good qualities of the Argun.

The monasteries (*Gompa*) play an important part in the life of the Ladākhis. Nearly every village has its monastery, generally built in a high place difficult of access. At the entrance are prayer cylinders, sometimes worked by water-